

« **Speak What** » by Marco Micone (1989)

It is so nice to hear you speak
of *La Romance du vin*
and of *L'Homme rapaillé*
To imagine your *coureurs des bois*
poems in their quivers

we are one hundred peoples who came from far away
to share your dreams and your winters
we had the words
of Montale and Neruda
the breath of the Urals
the rythm of the Haiku

Speak what now
our parents no longer understand our children

we are strangers
to the anger of Félix
and the spleen of Nelligan
tell us of your Charter
and the red beauty of your autumns
of the dark October
we are sensitive
to these rhythmic steps
to these locked up minds

Speak what
how do you speak now
in your fancy salons
do you remember the noise of the factories?
and the voice of the foremen
you sound like them more and more

Speak what now
that nobody understands you
not in St-Henri nor in Montréal-Nord
there we speak
the language of silence
and powerlessness

Speak what
"production, profit and percentage"
tell us of something else

of the children we will have together
of the garden we will make for them

Free yourselves from the traitors and the cilice
impose us your language
we will tell you
the war, torture and misery
we will tell our death with your words
so you do not die
and we will speak to you
with our bastard verb
and our broken accents
of Cambodia and El Salvador
of Chile and Roumania
of Molise and Peloponnese
until our last breath
speak what

we are one hundred peoples who came from far away
to tell you that you are not alone